

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Woodlawn  
other names/site number Woodlawn Plantation 071-0037

**2. Location**

street & number 5321 Henrys Mill Rd. not for publication N/A  
city or town Vernon Hill vicinity X  
state Virginia code VA county Pittsylvania code 143 Zip 24597

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination      request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets      does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant      nationally      statewide X locally. (     See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Virginia Department of Historic Resources**  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property      meets      does not meet the National Register criteria. (     See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  
     See continuation sheet.  
     determined eligible for the  
National Register  
     See continuation sheet.  
     determined not eligible for the National Register  
     removed from the National Register  
     other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Keeper \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

U. S. Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceWoodlawn  
Pittsylvania County, VA

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**5. Classification**

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**Ownership of Property** (Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

**Category of Property** (Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)  
☐ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

**Number of Resources within Property**

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>  2  </u>	<u>      </u> buildings
<u>  1  </u>	<u>      </u> sites
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> structures
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
<u>  3  </u>	<u>      </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register   0  

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

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**6. Function or Use**

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**Historic Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Domestic</u>	Sub: <u>Single dwelling</u>
<u>Domestic</u>	<u>secondary building</u>
<u>Funerary</u>	<u>cemetery</u>
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

**Current Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Domestic</u>	Sub: <u>Single dwelling</u>
<u>vacant/ not in use</u>	<u>          </u>
<u>Funerary</u>	<u>cemetery</u>
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

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**7. Description**

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**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)\_\_\_\_\_ Federal Style \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)foundation field stone, brickroof metalwalls woodother \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_**Narrative Description** (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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**Applicable National Register Criteria** (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- \_\_\_\_\_ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- \_\_\_\_\_ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- \_\_X\_\_ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- \_\_\_\_\_ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations** (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- \_\_\_\_\_ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ B removed from its original location.
- \_\_\_\_\_ C a birthplace or a grave.
- \_\_X\_\_ D a cemetery.
- \_\_\_\_\_ E a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- \_\_\_\_\_ F a commemorative property.
- \_\_\_\_\_ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

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**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions)\_\_\_\_\_ Architecture \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance ca. 1815-1955Significant Dates ca. 1815  
1914

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/aCultural Affiliation n/aArchitect/Builder unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS)**   preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.   previously listed in the National Register   previously determined eligible by the National Register   designated a National Historic Landmark   recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #              recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #           **Primary Location of Additional Data**  X   State Historic Preservation Office   Other State agency   Federal agency   Local government   University   OtherName of repository: VA Department of Historic Resources

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**10. Geographical Data**

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Acreage of Property 8.0 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing

1 17 663942 4071439 2           3            4              See continuation sheet.

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**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

U. S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

Woodlawn  
Pittsylvania County, VA

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title: Michael J. Pulice, Architectural Historian

Organization: Virginia Department of Historic Resources date November 15, 2004

street & number: 1030 Penmar Ave SE telephone 540-857-7586

city or town Roanoke state VA zip code 24013

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets****Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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**Property Owner**

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name George and Sarah Farson

street & number 4901 Henrys Mill Rd. telephone 434-432-9209

city or town Vernon Hill state VA zip code 24597

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Woodlawn  
Pittsylvania Co. Virginia

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**Summary Description**

Woodlawn is among the best known historic homes in Pittsylvania County, Virginia. Once the center of a vast plantation, the relatively small but unusual, two-part manor house is well preserved as a family heirloom, used for special occasions. The two 1½-story main blocks of the house, connected by a hyphen, are nearly identical in size, shape, and materials. Both sections of the house are constructed of mortised-and-tenoned heavy timber framing, sheathed with beaded weatherboards fastened with machine-cut nails. Both have medium-pitch gable roofs covered with standing seam sheet metal. The early windows are nine-over-nine double hung sash with molded architraves. Cornices are boxed, with applied dentils. On the interior are traditional plaster walls, faux-grained wainscoting and stenciled chair rail. Skillfully carved interior woodwork includes an interior archway with keystone and reed moldings, and beautifully ornamented Federal style mantels. Within the eight-acre nominated parcel are the main house, an early-nineteenth-century log smokehouse, and a family cemetery that dates back several generations.

**Site Description**

Pittsylvania County, named for William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, is located in the piedmont of south central Virginia, sharing its southern border with the Virginia-North Carolina state line. The largest county in the Commonwealth of Virginia, it was formed from Halifax County in 1767, and has maintained its present boundaries since 1777. The county seat of Chatman is 140 miles from Richmond, Virginia, 50 miles from the bustling early 19<sup>th</sup>-century commercial center of Lynchburg, Virginia, and 96 miles from Raleigh, North Carolina [Pittsylvania County Economic Development Organization, Pittsylvania County Government website, October 26, 2004.]

Woodlawn manor is located about 13 miles from Chatham, on the east side of Rt. 698, one mile south of the junction of Rt. 698 and Rt. 664. The eastern boundary of the eight-acre nominated parcel meets the Pittsylvania-Halifax County line at a single point, but does not cross or follow the county line. The property sits at about 500 feet above sea level, on a terrace created long ago by the meandering Sandy Creek, a tributary of the Banister River. The creek bed is now some 1500 feet east of the manor house. On a neighboring parcel of land east of the house, across the county line, is the site of the eighteenth-century Henry's Mill. The mill dam was lost to flooding in the 1912 and the mill subsequently demolished, but its location is still marked on USGS topographic maps. On another parcel west of the house, across Rt. 698, are two cemeteries that once served the mill community, and date to the same era as the mill. *The mill site and historic cemeteries west of Rt. 698 are not included in the nominated parcel.*

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**Architectural Description**

The west block of the house is believed to have been built first. Its plan consists of a large main hall measuring 19' 2" by 11' 7", and a small rear bedchamber on the first floor, and an open, heated loft space above, accessed via a boxed-in corner stair in the hall space. Ceiling height is 11 feet. Corner fireplaces in the downstairs rooms are vented by a common internal end chimney on the west wall. The Federal style mantel in the hall is tall and impressive with its bed moldings and familiar reeding, three square pilasters with projecting capitals, raised panels, drip moldings, cresting and faux graining. The hearth is refaced with later brick. Paneled wainscoting, painted white, compliments the darker painted plaster walls. Random-width yellow pine floorboards are preserved in fine condition throughout the house.

The east block of the house appears to have been built at roughly the same time, or possibly soon after the west block was completed. Its division of space is almost the opposite of east block. Here the smaller, elongated space is in the front, and the larger room is in the rear. These rooms functioned as more formal spaces. In the front was a combination greeting room and stair hall, the greeting area being divided from the stairs by an elegant round archway with impostes, keystone, and reed moldings embellishing the intrados. The stairs at the east end of the front room, consisting of unpainted pine treads and risers, wind halfway up to a landing, where a second flight begins. While not overwhelmingly elegant or overwrought, the staircase possesses an unusually light and delicate feeling, enhanced by the cantilevered landing, its thin profile, as well as the modest rail and newel post, and extremely slender square balusters. Below the stair landing is an original four-panel door. White-painted, wainscoting and chair rail encircle the room and follow the staircase to the second floor.

The north room of the east block, was probably used as the formal dining room. Within this room is an almost perfect state of historic integrity and the abode's finest woodwork. The fireplace, on the east wall, is in splendid condition. Its tall, imposing faux-grained mantel features a raised center tablet with sunburst motif above a carved floral design, flanked by paired half-colonnettes supporting pilaster capitals. The wainscoting in this northeast room is especially noteworthy. It is beautifully walnut grained and stenciled, and features hand-painted tromp l'oeil imagery.

In 1923, a new hyphen was built and kitchen space was added to the rear of the building. It is not known if the two main blocks were connected prior to that time. The basement, excavated in the 1950s to accommodate a furnace, still has a dirt floor.

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**Other Contributing Resources at Woodlawn**

The smokehouse built into the hillside behind the manor house is the lone survivor of the many dependencies that once stood on the property. Clearly of nineteenth-century origin, it measures roughly 12 ft. by 14 ft., with hand-hewn pine logs, V-notched at the corners. It has a fieldstone foundation, and a front gable roof covered with standing-seam sheet metal. The front door is fashioned of sawn vertical boards. The building is preserved in fine condition and possesses a high level of integrity.

The family cemetery just north of the house contains 12 marked graves. It was started in 1914 with the burial of Charles Willis, who was born in 1868. Julia Henry Farson, Woodlawn heiress, was buried there in 1991. The cemetery is a contributing site within the nominated parcel.

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Summary and Justification**

Woodlawn, a Federal-style, two-part, story-and-a-half frame dwelling located in Pittsylvania County, was built in two phases during the first half of the nineteenth century. It is among the finest and most prestigious historic homes in rural Southside Virginia, appearing in local and regional history books. The house is significant for its unusual plan and old-world methods of construction, as well as the finely carved, grained and marbled woodwork of its interior, which contrasts greatly with the austerity of its exterior. Built for John Henry and his descendants, the house remains within the Henry family lineage, and the historic integrity of the house and grounds have been meticulously maintained up to the present day. The house is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The period of significance begins ca. 1815, about the time the early section appears to have been constructed, and ends in 1955 with the fifty-year cut-off.

**Historical Background**

Judge James Henry, first cousin of famed patriot Patrick Henry, owned at least 20,000 acres in Pittsylvania County by 1770, at the peak of his influence and wealth. These holdings probably included the land that would later comprise Woodlawn Plantation, but it appears that he never lived in the county, remaining instead in Accomack County in eastern Virginia. The judge's son, John

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Henry, was probably the first member of the Henry family to actually reside at Woodlawn, and appears to have been responsible for construction of the house. Records show that John Henry was a property owner in Halifax County, part of which later became Pittsylvania County, by 1772 [Halifax County Deed Book 9, page 15].

Contrary to local tradition, both parts of the house appear to have been constructed between ca. 1815 and 1820. The Pittsylvania County land tax books for 1820-1822 list John Henry as owning a 700-acre tract with buildings valued at \$1500. From 1823 to 1839, "John Henry Dec'd Estate" is listed as the owner of the 700 acres with buildings valued at \$1500. From 1840-1844 "John Henry Dec'd Estate" is still listed as the owner of the 700 acres, but with buildings only valued at \$1200. [Since 1840 was a re-assessment year, the buildings were probably valued less because of their age]. In 1845 the tract was divided between James W. Henry and John S. Henry. The tract James received consisted of 151 acres and the buildings, still valued at \$1200. John received 343.5 acres with no buildings. In 1853, a man named Anderson Willis bought the several tracts from James W. Henry, including the \$1200 worth of buildings. Had a second part of the house been added during the 1820-1853 period, an increase in building values would have been noted in the land tax books. Architectural investigations strongly support the notion that both parts of the house were constructed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century rather than the late 18<sup>th</sup> century or in the 1840s. Supporting evidence includes a predominance of early machine-cut nails and lack of hand-forged nails, as well as the predominance of vertically (power) sawn rather than hewn or pit-sawn framing. Stylistically, the interiors of both main blocks exhibit strong Federal-style hallmarks that would have been quite old-fashioned in the region by 1840.

**Acknowledgements**

Many individuals contributed to this nomination over an unfortunately extended period of time. An original draft was prepared by Mrs. Frances Hallam Hurt. As a local historian, Mrs. Hurt has been keenly interested in the Woodlawn property for many years, and continues to be a stalwart of historic landmark preservation in the area. In documenting Woodlawn, Mrs. Hurt received considerable assistance from architectural historian Anne Carter Lee, who conducted the first survey of the property in 1973. In the late 1980s, Mrs. Hurt also enlisted retired judge Langhorne Jones of Chatham to help sort out the litany of deed papers from the period that bear the name Henry. David Edwards and John Salmon of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources were also closely involved in documenting the property in the early 1990s. Henry Hurt, of Chatham, and Gary Grant, of Danville each provided information or assistance that facilitated the preparation of this nomination.

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**9. Bibliography**

Clement, Maude C. *The History of Pittsylvania County, Virginia*. Lynchburg, J. P. Bell, 1929.

Fitzgerald, Madalene Vaden, *Pittsylvania: Homes and People of the Past*. Danville, Virginia: Womack Press, 1974, 24-25.

Halifax County Deed Books, 1767-1815.

Hurt, Frances Hallam and Madalene Vaden Fitzgerald, *Eighteenth Century Landmarks of Pittsylvania County, Virginia*. Pittsylvania County Historical Society, 1967, 30-32.

Hurt, Frances Hallam, *An Intimate History of the American Revolution in Pittsylvania County*. Danville, Virginia: Womack Press, 1976, 214-215.

Hurt, Frances Hallam, Draft National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1991. DHR archives.

Melton, Herman, *Pittsylvania's Eighteenth Century Gristmills*. Lynchburg, H. E. Howard, Inc., 1990.

Pittsylvania County Deed Books and Land Tax Books, 1815-1853.

**10. Boundary Description**

The boundary of the 8.0-acre nominated parcel conforms to that of Pittsylvania County tax parcel 11700-0A-00-0002-C.

**Boundary Justification**

The 8.0-acre nominated parcel is part of the Henry family ancestral land holdings known as Woodlawn Plantation, and includes the two remaining structures from Woodlawn's period of significance.

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All photographs are of: Woodlawn

Pittsylvania County, Virginia

Photographer: Anne Carter Lee      Date: 1988

Negative #21601

Location of negatives: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond

1. VIEW OF: House, south & east elevations
2. VIEW OF: House, west elevation
3. VIEW OF: House, north & west elevations
4. VIEW OF: House, exterior detail of window and weatherboards
5. VIEW OF: House, interior archway, southeast room, first floor
6. VIEW OF: House, interior arch detail, southeast room, first floor
7. VIEW OF: House, interior arch detail, southeast room, first floor
8. VIEW OF: House, mantel, northeast room, first floor
9. VIEW OF: House, mantel, southwest room, first floor
10. VIEW OF: House, mantel detail, southwest room, first floor
11. VIEW OF: House, interior doorway, southwest room, first floor
12. VIEW OF: House, wainscoting, northeast room, first floor
13. VIEW OF: House, wainscoting detail [painted urn], northeast room, first floor
14. VIEW OF: House, interior door, northeast room, first floor
15. VIEW OF: House, mantel, east second floor bedroom
16. VIEW OF: Smokehouse, front (west) elevation